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DIARY OF COL. LANDON CARTER.

(Continued from XV., page 211.)

14 Wednesday, February, 1776. I see the *Philadelphia* Pamphlet, called *Common Sense*,¹ is much advertised in Philadelphia, and it is pretended to be written by an Englishman. If true it is really much to be suspected of its secret intentions to fix an ill impression that the Americans are resolved not to be reconciled. And, indeed, that matter is encouraged under the most absurd arguments in the world. But I do suppose it to be the concealed topic of even some in the Congress, tho' they have so repeatedly contradicted, & tho' they have so severely reprehended Dr. Cooper some time ago, who actually charged them with a design of independency. I have written an answer to the Extracts published by Purdie,² but as I do understand by the advertizements, tho' it is said to be in great demand, the new edition is to contain many additions I would wait to see what they are; for the Present impression of it is quite scandalous & disgraces the American cause much; w'ch, as it is reasonably imagined to be supported by almighty mercy, I would not have its original justice, constitutional freedom, in the least sullied.

I do hope it will not be so, but I have, I think, reason to conclude that this cursed temper of Billy Beale³ is again getting upwards; for in order to be secure from this accursed enemy

¹ Written by Tom Paine.

² Alexander Purdie, Editor of one of the *Virginia Gazettes* published in Williamsburg.

³ His manager or steward.

to mankind General Dunmore, who burns purely out of cowardice to distress those whom he dares not fight, I had ordered all my corn to be removed from the river side to the cornhouses on Purpose built to keep it at a good distance from my landing above 3 weeks ago; but it did not suit with this fool's inclination, and it is not yet attempted to be done, Pretending bad roads; Just as if anything should Prevent that prodigious case to live; for that monster lately sent and burnt a cornhouse with 100 hundred barrels in it because he durst not fight the people like men.

15 Thursday, February, 1776.

Just as I expected yesterday, so it turned out with this foolish tempered fellow Beal. I rode out, resolving to see everything, as the bad weather had kept me from visiting my plantation for some time; and let he that will say to the contrary, I have experienced there is no one of those Stewards or Gentlemen overseers but must have the employer's eye over them, or be their experience or care what it will, things always do go wrong. Accordingly, tho' pleased with my cowyard, my cattle, my Prize horse as a very good shift after this last whirlwind gust, and, indeed my mill dam answering to my real expectations, good and strong, I went to my hen house plant patch just sown and found the fellows only running a hasty fence about it. I told them to make the fence very strong and good, quite round, in their perils. They said Mr. Beale had ordered them get done directly and leave the rest till by and by that indetermined hour w^{ch} never happens in the thousands, especially overseers. At the time I really saw a sow & several stout shoats ready to rush in & go to rooting. (Col. Carter tells of other neglects of his overseer, and finally bid him be gone off his plantation since he would not do as directed. He did not go, but after that would hardly speak to Col. Carter.

15 Thursday, February, 1776. Poor W^m. Jackson, of Rippon Hall,⁴ dead 13, and I am vastly distressed what to do; how to

⁴Ripon Hall plantation is situated on the York River, about six miles from Williamsburg. It obtained its name from Colonel Edmund Jennings, who had his residence there till he died in 1727. He came from Ripon, in Yorkshire.

act or who to get to succeed him. At last as Mr. William Beale, Paymaster, had been twice disappointed in the army I thought of him. (States that his son, Robert Wormeley Carter, is 40 years of age and himself near 70.)

17 Saturday, February, 1776. Rec'd last night a letter from y^e com. of safety to order Capt. B. Ball's com. to march to Richmond court house, where the 5th regiment is to be stationed.

Sent the Rippon Hall man home yesterday with a letter to Ben Valentine, who wrote to succeed Jackson for the remainder of the year, to bid him come up, &c., immediately, if he liked the terms . . .

In my resignation of my county lieutenancy I gave for one good reason that the county lieutenant by the ordinance had not the appointment of any subaltern, not even a Sergeant or a Drummer . . .

19 Monday, February, 1776. One James Hyde came here to get the Rippon Hall q^r. Said that he heard Valentine loved drink too much—that he could not live with me for so little as £35 a year. I told him it was that I should give no more, and so he went away. I wrote to Col. F. L. Lee & Genl. Washington about getting Landon made aide-de-camp to the Maj^r. Gen^l., who is to command our forces. I could not help in both my letters giving my sentiments on the pamphlet called *Common Sense*, it is so repleat with art & contradiction, and man is represented in it as a being w^{ch} ought to be not only unforgiving, but implacable to the highest degree, & he that does not so think is nothing short of a coward & a sycophant, which, in plain meaning, must be a damned *rascal*. Nay, he goes farther; this implacability must be a part of that divine image which was implanted in man. I have in Washington's letter complimented Gen. Lee in desiring to be excused from thinking that the Gen^t who could Publish his thoughts to a Burgoyne at his departure for England could be the author of such a Pamphlet.

21. Wednesday . . I went yesterday, being shrove tuesday and my family all gone to Capt. Beale's, to see the two Pages

& Peter Thornton & his lady at Colo. Tayloe's, where I heard that Nat Harrison was courting Sam Gordon's widow.

I do not know anything more demonstrative of weakness than an old man's turning a lover. I fancy I know pretty well what age is.

24 Saturday, February, 1776. I was at Colo. Tayloe's yesterday. Jones⁵ was there. At first he introduced the Pamphlet called *Common Sense*,¹ of Philadelphia Production, as a most incomparable Performance. I replied it was as rascally & nonsensical as possible, for it was only a sophisticated attempt to throw all men out of Principles & I showed him several parts, and it was as much the random of a despot as anything could be, for it declared every man a damned Scoundrel that didn't think as he did, a coward & a sycophant; and, after reducing mankind to mere brutish nature, that of an implacable and unforgiving temper, it tells us it is that image of God at first implanted in us. Just as if he who said Father, forgive them, &c., in his expiring moments, intended to instance himself on the cross as an example of unforgiveness. This man writes for Independency, & is under the necessity of stating an independence in man at his creation, when it is evident he must be a social being. The Dr. retired. At dinner a seeming justification of a mere pillage to say no worse of N. O. Lee's house, because he had been foolish enough to be singularly inhospitable. I replied a justification of such a behavior speaks a real independence & such a man might plead agst a' reconciliation. Then the topic of Mr. Tayloe's quartan being cured by Jones, contrary to Flood's⁶ & my opinion, I urged a change of the Period was no cure & the Lady fell into an ague at dinner. I laughed at the cure, was told by the smart "My reading without knowledge of Anatomy would not do." I told him no doubt he was a clever fellow; but with such an opinion that nobody could read but himself, he'd soon show himself to be a damned ass. I asked him to excuse the rudeness, but it was a friendly admonition.

⁵ Dr. Walter Jones, a distinguished physician, and who later served in the United States Congress.

⁶ Dr. Nicholas Flood.

This day I agreed with Ben Valentine to be overseer at Rippon, where Jackson had lived . . . I wrote to get James Shields to overlook this Valentine as he recommended him. I forbid him letting one thing go from my Plantation without my leave. I also ordered him to go to John Timson's⁷ and order the money and things he took away to be returned, or I would prosecute him for felony.

This day nine of Capt. Beale's regular company came here desiring to speak with me, (Gives them a treat, advice, &c.)

25 Sunday, February, 1776. Harrison Randolph got here about 3 yesterday. It is imagined Clinton with 400 men, are come in, entrenching at Gosport that was, and that Col. How, with 2,000 either was gone or going to drive them on board again. Dunmore had written again to Col. Corbin⁸ & invited him on board, having letters of importance to the country, w^{ch} he would only communicate or deliver to the Colo., who had asked leave of Committee of Safety to visit him & was to sett off yesterday. If this is not one of the devil's vile tricks, he must be now convinced that things are tending with us; for a ministry so resolute as they have expressed themselves would not have recalled this agent of their destruction, one so calculated without any feelings more than a bull dog to perpetuate their oppression. But what shall we say to Corbin who has openly declared his conviction of the creature's baseness & Villany. How can he go to see him? I know I would not.

It is sayd Byrd⁹ is going to the congress to solicit an appointment to be Maj^r. Gen^l. here. I know some such panders to him as to wish him success; but I would never trust him & shall always remember his treatment of our young Effingham, his son, who left the navy to assist his own country even agt the threats of being disinherited by his father.

⁷ John Timson, who lived on York River, on the west side of Queen's Creek, adjoining Ripon Hall. He was descended from Samuel Timson, whose tombstone has been recently removed from the old graveyard at the mouth of Queen's Creek, to Bruton Church, in Williamsburg.

⁸ Colonel Richard Corbin, of Laneville, in King and Queen County, the King's receiver general for the colony.

⁹ William Byrd, of Westover.

I mistook H. Randolph. Colo. Corbin had̄ gone to Dunmore & was to return to Town yesterday.

26 Monday, February, 1776.

Still rainy. Yesterday Capt. B. Ball & his Lieut. dined here & so did Colo. Tayloe & his lady. Madam is now for independence. I am satisfied she is everyway & anyway as often the wind varies.

28 Wednesday very cold & cloudy after a rain all day yesterday. A great dance here last night. Capt. B. Ball & his Lieutenant here. He brot me Purdie's 23, wch says Clinton & Piercy are arrived with 400 light infantry & several officers of other regiments. It is that they are to go up Potomack or to N. Carolina to quell the regulators, the rest of the news of little consequence. Dunmore, with his 500, are entrenching at Portsmouth, and our men a little way off. 36 commiss^{rs} are coming in, 3 to each assembly, but for what, when we have agreed to a congress.

March 1, 1776, Friday. Jno. Selden taken ill with all the symptoms of these bilious inflammatorys called Plurisies. (Col. Carter prescribes bleeding and mercurial purges.)

3 Sunday, March, 1776. It seems our salt is just gone. J. Wormeley below makes his people make up the bread with the salt river water, & they say it answers very well.

Selden is preparing himself to go home, finding himself so very well. I have pressed him to stay and have told him the consequences that may happen, and that if another inflamed state sh'd happen it may not be favorable to him; but to such an obstinate man nothing shd be said to stop him. He builds on his youth and is perverse in it, tho almost burnt out.

4th Monday & cold & foggy day this. Yesterday I rode to Colo. Tayloe's with Wormeley, and was there greatly alarmed. Selden, who rode with us as far as Neal's cornfield fence on his way home, being behind me, so ill as to be obliged to return & a message sent to me. I ordered Nassau back to to give him a vomit which I had prevented in, by his own means as before, & not knowing his situation as to vomits I ordered him 3 grs. tartar in a qt. of warm water.

4 March Selden must go he says to-day. I agree to it, but bid him take care of himself; is again set off and to Giberns.

Landon & H. Randolph went to Gibernes & returned past 9. It is a shame this sensible Parson should be such a decoy to youths as he is. But he loves cards & their concomitants.

12. Tuesday, March, 1776.

Naval off^r. Lee got home from town on Sunday night, having left the city on Saturday. The story of Henry's resigning because the congress had put him from being Colo. of our 1st. regiment to the 6th. is false, as I asserted it must be. If anything was the cause of his resigning, it was because his commission confined him only to his command of the 1st. regiment and not as the convention had made it of all the Virg^a. forces. And indeed this alteration was just, for it is impossible to suppose him capable of any conduct as to all the forces. But his friends, willing to give him a false praise, say he has harangued the mutining soldiers upon his resignation; which is false as to any quiet it produced; for it was evident that the behavior begot a presenting of Pieces till Tom Bullet called a man or two, and called out to a party well disposed, who came in to his assistance and clapt these two fellows under a close confinement.

12. Tuesday, March, 1776.

The Esq^r. (R. W. Carter) met the Northern Express going into town. He told him a ship from Bristol had arrived & gave notice that 24 commissioners were coming with a man of war to be joined with the 12 governors to treat about an accommodation, and that all the governors were to be seated in their governments by an army of men, 8,000 of wch were for Virginia and the Carolinas. I have even heard of this Bristol man long ago and these commissioners so that I pay little credit to it. But we owe the credit of such reports to our famous Pamphlet, *Common Sense*, wch has drove all who espouse it from the justice of their contest into a confusion, not knowing what to resolve upon, therefore as fear is ever the Product of confusion, we embrace anything for truth; and I wish we may not at last be so confused as to be

intimidated into any mode of concession at last. It was nothing difficult to foresee this as soon as our articles for a government in wch they should stand a chance of some share in a continental Supremacy over their fellows got to filling our hearts (otherwise justly disposed to be free and again reconciled) with a brutish and unchristian resentment and implacability at the Injuries rec'd, Just as if man, in his undirected nature, could not do injuries wch, however irreparable, should, at the most, be only punishable in him, but be forgiven in every state of real repentance and contrition as to those of his family who may have been urged on to espouse his endeavours wch Produced these Injuries. For my part, I am satisfied these authors intended this confusion, and if they have not done it for the ministry, they have done it for themselves as before, without considering the constant result of confusion as to fear and timidity, wch must render his boasted Victoriousness in America extremely doubtful at last. I don't intend to Prophecy, but it seems to be the design, and Clinton in an anecdote between him & Dunmore must have seen it, for it is said Dunmore wanted his men to attack our forces at Kempe's Landing, but the cautious general asked if he still thought these people would not fight, and should he be able to beat them could he keep his ground. If he could not, it could be to no purpose, and it seemed better to wait a while till things now in a good way should produce some things that he thought would be the consequence of what he had discovered what that was he was too prudent to trust Dunmore with. Here, then, I may apply Metastasio's observation to Ld. Stormont on the news of the sudden revolution in Sweden. A rare scene for a drama, indeed; & whilst men's heads are so full of contradictions and caprice, who can wonder at any sudden event, especially as the witnesses of mankind are so various and opposite, and even then our conceptions, so frequently at strife amongst themselves; therefore, it seems impossible for the world to go on without such events of an unexpected nature.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]